

EASTERN BENGAL DISTRICT
GAZETTEERS.

CHITTAGONG.

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CALCUTTA:
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coast and particularly on the low islands that fringe it, are found a scanty vegetation of *Ischomum* and various other grasses with *Aerostichum aureum*, *Tamarix*, *Excoecaria*, *Kandelia*, *Bruguiera*, *Rhizophora*, *Clerodendron inerme* and other littoral or swamp-forest species. *Guttia* (*Cerriops Roxburghiana*) is abundant and largely exported for firewood; and *nunia* (*Ægliatis rotundifolia*) is also common, salt being obtainable from the stems by lixiviation. The lower hills that separate the river-valleys are mainly covered with a dense but often rather dry jungle largely composed of gigantic trees, the most conspicuous being various *gurjans* (*Dipterocarpi*), with which are associated many Laurineæ, Leguminosæ, Rubiaceæ, Euphorbiaceæ, oaks, myrtles and chestnuts, Ternstroemiaceæ, Meliaceæ and Urticaceæ. Palms are rather plentiful, and a *Cycas* is abundant; in the damper forests palms are still more plentiful, and Lythraceæ, Meliaceæ, Loguminosæ, Verbenaceæ, Magnoliaceæ, and species of *Ficus* abound. *Casuarina equisetifolia* finds its northern natural limit on the southern coast near Cox's Bazar.*

FAUNA.

Mammals.

Writing in 1786, Sir William Jones described Chittagong as a noble field for a naturalist, and this description still applies to it even after the lapse of 120 years, during which the jungle has yielded to the plough year after year. In few, if any, districts in Bengal is there such a range of animal, bird, fish and insect life, the species found being often allied to those of Burma and different from those seen in India proper. Among the larger carnivora are tigers and leopards, which are found throughout the district. Leopards, including black and clouded leopards, are especially common, finding shelter in the numerous hill ranges and being sometimes seen in the outskirts of the town of Chittagong; one was, indeed, trapped within municipal limits in 1906. Bears (*Melursus labiatus*) are also found, but are rare. Wild cats of various kinds (golden, clouded, marbled, tiger and leopard cats) abound; they are very destructive to small game, and, when in the neighbourhood of man, to sheep, goats and poultry. The Indian bear cat (*Artictis binturong*) and the large Indian civet are also found, and there are several varieties of the mongoose family, including the crab mongoose, which is often confounded with the badger. Wild dog (known locally as *ram-ui* from *ram*, forest, and *ui*, dog) wander very far in search of deer and other game.

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Wild elephants are found in the south of the district, where they are very destructive. To the north a small herd crosses occasionally from the Tippera hills, but they remain only during the winter season, after which they go back to Hill Tippera. The elephants of Chittagong are small and are not considered of much value for *kheddah* purposes. They have been left alone of late years, and have consequently increased in numbers notwithstanding the progress of cultivation. As an instance of the distance to which they will sometimes wander, it may be mentioned that a fine tusker was caught in the station of Chittagong in September 1885 after it had been for some days in one of the compounds.

Wild cattle, also *gayāl* or *mīhun* (*Bos frontalis*), are found in the same tracts as elephants, and also cause damage to the crops near the hills; some of them have been domesticated by the hillmen in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Recently a bull *gayāl* of what is believed to be record size was shot at Hinguli, its height from the base of the hoof to the top of the hump being 8 feet 7 inches. *Sāmbār* (*Cervus unicolor*) and barking deer are found throughout the district, and spotted deer in some localities. The Sumatran rhinoceros, which has two horns and a hairy coat, has been caught alive on several occasions; a specimen of the hairy-eared rhinoceros (*R. lasiotis*) has been sent to the Zoological Gardens in London. The Burmese forest goat has been seen in the hills near Dhubāsarai.

Among the monkey tribe may be mentioned the white-browed gibbon (*Hylobates hoolook*), the slow lemur and the long-tailed *langūr*. Other mammals are the Indian fox, jackal, hog-badger, marten, otter, and scaly ant-eater. Dolphins and porpoises are found in the rivers and estuaries, and cases have been recorded of whales being cast up on the coast. The dugong appears to have been captured on one occasion, more than 20 years ago, off Maikhāl island, and has been seen of late years at the mouth of the Mātāmuhari river. Amongst rodents there are several species of squirrels, mice and rats, which are only too numerous. Porcupines are common, and hares are also found.

The birds of the district include vultures, falcons, eagles, hawks, ^{Birds,} kites and owls, swallows and swifts, among which the palm swift may be mentioned, and nightjars. Rollers of the Burmese type, bee-eaters and kingfishers of many kinds are also found; the brilliant *Haleyon fuscus* is shot in great numbers, the skins being exported to China. Besides these, there are broadbills, hornbills, known locally as *dhanesh*, parakeets, the love bird (*latkan*), which hangs downwards instead of perching, many woodpeckers and